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Benghazi 785 9-15-69

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EXCISE

44
ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 UCF-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 JPM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 AID-28 PC-04 NEA-13 E-15
IO-13 OPR-02 O-02 OC-06 SY-03 SCS-04 SCA-01 ACDA-16 COM-08
FRB-02 TRSY-11 STR-08 PPT-02 AGR-20 INT-06 SIL-01 LAB-06 DOT-12
RSR-01 /271 W

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R 151414Z SEP 69
FM AMEMBASSY BENGHAZI
TO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 264

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [signature] DATE 12 JUL 1982
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

C O N F I D E N T I A L BENGHAZI 785

FROM LANE

SUBJECT: THE REVOLUTION IN BENGHAZI - A ROUND-UP AND SITUATION REPORT - SEPTEMBER 15.

1. TWO WEEKS AFTER OUTBREAK OF SEPTEMBER ONE REVOLUTION, LIFE IN BENGHAZI HAS RETURNED TO NEAR NORMAL. SINCE FUSSILADE OF SEPTEMBER 8 (SEE BENGHAZI 734) THERE HAVE BEEN NO SERIOUS OUTBREAKS OF SHOOTING, NUMBER OF SOLDIERS ON STREETS HAS BEEN GREATLY REDUCED, AND TRAFFIC IS ALMOST BACK TO NORMAL DURING NON-CURFEW HOURS. ALMOST ALL BUSINESS AND CONSTRUCTION FIRMS HAVE RESUMED NORMAL ACTIVITY. SECURITY IN FRONT OF RCC HQ AT BROADCAST STATION AND BERKA HQ OF SECOND BRIGADE HAS BEEN RELAXED. STRICT DUSK TO DAWN CURFEW, HOWEVER, IS DAILY REMINDER THAT BENGHAZI IS STILL LIVING UNDER MARTIAL LAW.

2. THE SEPTEMBER ONE REVOLUTION CAUGHT EVERYONE BY SURPRISE AND IT IS THIS FACTOR OF SURPRISE WHICH IS LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SMALL NUMBER OF CASUALTIES AND ABSENCE OF ORGANIZED OPPOSITION SO FAR. NO ONE WAS PREPARED, PSYCHOLOGICALLY OR MILITARILY, TO RESIST. BLOODLESSNESS OF COUP IS ALSO IMPORTANT

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IF TRIBAL LEADERS HAD BEEN MURDERED, FELLOW TRIBESMEN WOULD HAVE BEEN OBLIGATED TO AVENGE THEIR DEATH. IF THEY ARE SIMPLY DISARMED AND CAPTURED, ONE CAN AFFORD TO WAIT AND NEGOTIATE. TRAVELLERS IN RURAL CYRENICA REPORT VERY FEW CHECK POINTS OR SIGNS OF ARMY ACTIVITY OUTSIDE CITIES. APPARENTLY RCC HAS NO FEAR OF TRIBAL DISSIDENCE AT THIS TIME.

3. GIVEN CONFUSION WHICH REIGNED DURING FIRST TEN DAYS OF REVOLUTION, THERE HAVE BEEN REMARKABLY FEW INCIDENTS ENVOLVING FOREIGNERS. ALTHOUGH OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF REVOLUTION CLEARLY WANTED TO AVOID TROUBLE WITH EMBASSIES AND FOREIGN COMMUNITY, THEIR CONTROL OVER INDIVIDUAL SOLDIERS WAS MINIMAL. TROOPS ON GUARD AT EMBASSIES AND CHECK POINTS FREQUENTLY RECEIVED GARBLED INSTRUCTIONS OR NONE AT ALL. IN ADDITION, MANY WERE ON DUTY FOR DAYS WITHOUT PROPER FOOD, WATER OR CHANCE TO TAKE THEIR BOOTS OFF. THEY ARE NOW BEING REWARDED FOR THEIR FAITHFULNESS - PFC AND CORPORAL'S STRIPES ARE SPROUTING EVERYWHERE.

4. EXCEPT FOR STRICT CURFEW DURING FIRST FEW DAYS, REVOLUTION CAUSED FEW HARDSHIPS FOR AVERAGE BENGHAZI CITIZEN. PERHAPS BECAUSE OF EXCELLENT WHEAT HARVEST IN CYRENICA THIS YEAR, BREAD WAS ALWAYS PLENTIFUL. OTHER STABLES AND MOST VEGETABLES WERE ALSO AVAILABLE AT PRICES NO HIGHER THAN BEFORE THE REVOLUTION. ELECTRICITY AND WATER WERE NEVER CUT OFF AND LACK OF TELEPHONE SERVICE DID NOT DISTURB THE MAJORITY THAT DO NOT HAVE PHONES.

5. DESPITE THESE SURFACE INDICATIONS HOWEVER, ECONOMY OF BENGHAZI AREA HAS BEEN BADLY HURT. WHEN WORK IN PORT RESUMED, THERE WERE 34 SHIPS WAITING TO BE OFF-LOADED AND SITUATION IS NOT MUCH BETTER NOW SINCE SHIPS ARE CONSTANTLY ARRIVING. IT WILL TAKE WEEKS TO CATCH UP. ALTHOUGH BANKS ARE NOW OPEN, LOCAL FINANCIAL SITUATION IS IN CONFUSION AND DIFFERENT REGULATIONS ARE REPORTEDLY BEING APPLIED IN DEFFERENT PARTS OF COUNTRY. OF MORE LONG RUN IMPORTANCE IS EFFECT OF REVOLUTION ON OIL INDUSTRY. LOFFLAND BROS., WHICH HAD NINE DRILLING RIGS OPERATING A MONTH AGO, REPORTS IT WILL PROBABLY HAVE MAXIMUM OF SIX WORKING ONE MONTH FROM NOW. OIL COMPANIES ARE CANCELLING DRILLING CONTRACTS AND ADOPTING WAIT AND SEE ATTITUDE BEFORE DECIDING WHETHER TO GO AHEAD WITH 1970 EXPANSION PLANS. A FURTHER DANGER IS PSYCHOLOGICAL - WORKERS FEEL THAT NOW THAT REVOLUTION HAS COME, THERE IS NO NEED TO WORK. ONE AMERICAN

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COMPANY REPORTED LAST WEEK THAT LIBYAN WORK CREW WHICH NORMALLY LOADS 30 TRUCKS A DAY HAD LOADED ONLY THREE. RCC IS AWARE OF DANGER AND HAS URGED PEOPLE TO WORK HARD, BUT IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW SUCCESSFUL ITS APPEAL WILL BE.

6. LOCAL REACTIONS TO REVOLUTION ARE JUST BEGINNING TO FILTER IN. [redacted] REPORTS MANY OF HIS LIBYAN CONTACTS ADOPTED WAIT AND SEE ATTITUDE DURING FIRST WEEK OF REVOLUTION BUT WERE DISMAYED BY COMPOSITION OF NEW CABINET. THESE ADMITTEDLY CONSERVATIVE LIBYANS BELIEVE COUNTRY NEEDS A LEADER TO RALLY AROUND, NOT A HALF-LIBYAN (AGHRIBI) FOR PRIME MINISTER AND A DISCREDITED JOURNALIST (UWAYSIR) FOR FOREIGN MINISTER. UNLESS SUCH A LEADER EMERGES, THEY DO NOT THINK PRESENT GOVERNMENT CAN LAST MORE THAN SIX MONTHS.
PALMER

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